

Application No. 09/934,799
Attorney Docket No. 01263.001203

123. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for generating annotation data for annotating a data file, the apparatus comprising:

an input operable to receive an input voice signal;

a speech recognizer operable (i) to convert the input voice signal into phoneme data and (ii) to process the phoneme data to identify words within the phoneme data;

an annotation generator operable to generate annotation data for the data file by combining the phoneme data and the words obtained by said speech recognizer, the annotation data being for use in subsequent retrieval of the data file;

an associator operable to associate the generated annotation data within with the data file; and

a storage device operable to store the annotation data in a database to allow the associated data file to be retrieved by searching for words and phonemes within the stored annotation data.

132. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 122, wherein said speech recognizer is operable to generate data defining a weighting for [[the]] phonemes in the phoneme data.

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135. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 123, wherein said speech recognizer is operable to generate data defining a weighting for [[the]] phonemes in the phoneme data.

144. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 141, wherein the annotation data defines a phoneme and word lattice and wherein said generating step of generating annotation data comprises the steps of:

- (i) generating data defining a plurality of nodes within the lattice and a plurality of links connecting the nodes within the lattice;
- (ii) generating data associating a plurality of phonemes of the phoneme data with a respective plurality of links; and
- (iii) generating data associating at least one of the words with at least one of the links.

145. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 144, wherein said generating step of generating annotation data generates data defining time stamp information for each of the nodes.

146. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 145, wherein said generating step of generating annotation data generates data which defines a block's location within a database.

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147. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 145, wherein the data file includes a time sequential signal, and wherein said generating step of generating annotation data generates time stamp data which is time synchronized with the time sequential signal.

163. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim [[122]] 123, wherein said automatic speech recognizer is operable to generate phoneme data that includes a phoneme lattice which identifies a number of different possible phoneme strings which correspond to speech within the input voice signal, and wherein said annotation generator is operable to generate the annotation data by combining the generated phoneme lattice with the words identified by said speech recognizer.

167. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 166, wherein said annotation generator is operable to generate header data including data identifying the language and the phoneme sets used by said automatic speech recognizer.

171. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 144, wherein said generating step of generating annotation data generates data defining the phoneme and word lattice in blocks of the nodes.

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